shepherded to the edge of a stage, guided by her compact LED lantern, while the whistles and driving bass of "C'mon N' Ride It (The Train)," by Quad City DJ's, readied us—a fugitive gathering of black folk—to figuratively "play this game." "This game" was one of fantasy and futurity, a reflection on how fugitive flight, in the not-so-distant past, likely happened in the dead of night, with bodies brushing up against verdurous landscapes that provided another layer of stealth. Miss Toto's performance prepared us to read the thirty-odd paintings, prints, and works on paper on view as complex forays into freedom—not simply fantastical but rather wedded to a familiar past.

"Cry, Baby" opens with Andy Warhol's *Unidentified Male*, 1950s, a tender, diminutive drawing that depicts an effeminate man weeping. Streaming down from his right eye are seven teardrops, three of which are filled in to resemble arrowheads. More tears—or raindrops—fall at a diagonal across the iron-gray-painted wall at the back of the show. These black, shimmering ovals not only gesture toward Shimoyama's nighttime paintings that dot the neighboring walls but also envelop works hung on the same wall that render black men or boys in barbershops—such as *Cut 4 Me* and *Finesse*, both 2017—thereby bridging the two bodies of work. *Finesse* is rich with femme, campy extravagance: A barber's cape embellished with dark feathers dangles from the canvas, clipper cords are adorned with gems, and the stylist's reddish acrylic nails are dusted with glitter. Despite the surrounding glamour, the seated patron's diamanté eyes are welling up with rhinestones. If we consider black barbershops as "hush harbors"—surreptitious places where black people create community and dialogue on economic opportunity and social mobility—then those tears might signal the release possible in these enclaves, where queer black men might temporarily escape the hypermasculine tropes to which they are often confined.

Devan Shimoyama, *Sudden Darkness, Sudden Flight (Paradise Watcher)*, 2016, acrylic, oil, colored pencil, beads, glitter, and feathers on canvas, 62 × 42".

True escape from these limitations comes in the form of magic in, say, *He Whispers Light into the Night*, 2015. Here, at the witching hour, the sparkly night sky brightens blackened leaves and branches while a male figure casts spells through the rainbow prism of his lips. The beam of light radiating from his gaping mouth also washes his face in an illusory glow that offers up his body as a beacon of emancipation. He seems to await the subject of *Sudden Darkness, Sudden Flight (Paradise Watcher)*, 2016, a twilit tableau in which palm fronds and pinkish-blue raindrops camouflage a vigilant figure seeking an opportunity to flee.

Riffing on a verse from Saul Williams's *She* (1999), Shimoyama frames blackness as "luminous" and always adjusting to context. It is through those adaptations that the artist quietly questions the modernist conceptions of nature as feminine and culture as masculine, lavishly queering both categories. Ultimately, the canvas becomes a space of gender performativity where, as feminist scholar Hortense Spillers might have said, black queer men "learn *who* the female is" within themselves, using myth and reality as signposts.

—*Ikechukwu Onyewuenyi*

CHICAGO

Sara Greenberger Rafferty

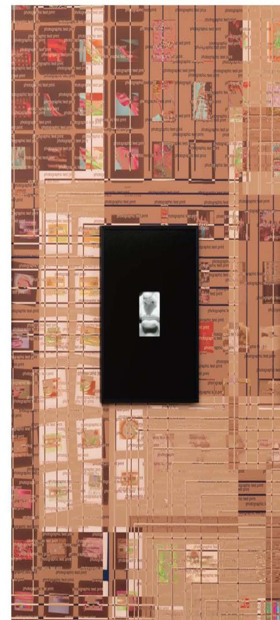
DOCUMENT

At the entrance to Sara Greenberger Rafferty's saturated précis on the props of studio photography, two black-framed photographs, each indexing thirty-nine scanned 35-millimeter slide images arranged in a loose grid, hung side by side. The tiny positive images exposed in *Slide I* and *Slide II (University of Michigan Extension)* (all works 2018) documented a variety of color-calibration and white-balancing cards, often juxtaposed with a white human hand as a test subject. Evincing Rafferty's material interest in transparent supports for photographs, these ink-jet prints were transferred onto clear acetate and adhered to Plexiglas with transparent acrylic polymer, imparting a gelatinous and ghostly quality to the antiquated slide format and the photographic tools they reveal.

In the main gallery, printed vinyl wallpaper covered much of one wall, its sepia-toned motif punctuated by text reading PHOTOGRAPHIC TEST PRINT. This tessellated graphic field functioned as a backdrop to a series of photographs that hung on top of it, and was interrupted by a central image of a colossal black oculus that could be interpreted as a camera lens or the pupil of an eye. This shape denoted the physical structure necessary for seeing and recording light, furthering Rafferty's investigation into the material conditions of photography. In addition, the imposing shadowy vacuum created a dramatic scale shift, functioning as an organizing schema in an exhibition dotted with collections of small found images.

Distributed in a straight line across the patterned wall, surrounding the oculus, the series of nine silver gelatin prints (titled with sequential single digits) represented the classic form of the darkroom test print. A cropped black-and-white image of a nose and mouth, shot against a dark background, progressively shifted in value and contrast from one photograph to the next. The soft gray light of *1* gave way to severe shadows and sharp tone variations in *9*. Enhancing the sense of progression, each print also contained a black number that corresponded to the sequence of the exposure test as well as to its title. These digits were visible in the lighter-value prints but gradually disappeared in the longer exposures.

View of "Sara Greenberger Rafferty," 2018. Foreground: *3*, 2018. Background: *Wallpaper for THE LAUGHTER*, 2018.



Nearly all the material in Rafferty's scans was culled from found film stock purchased on eBay. Full-spectrum color bars, brick-wall lens tests, and images of commercial stock photography tools were threaded through the exhibition. Like Michael Smith and William Wegman's 1986 video *The World of Photography*—which gives humorous pathos to the stereotypical photographer, who hangs a long-lens camera around his neck in search of the decisive moment and who relishes the magic of the darkroom—Rafferty's exhibition indulged the quirks and obsessions of professional photographers, especially in examining the medium's technical artifacts and quality-control methods. But she refrained from sentimentally lamenting a bygone era of darkroom production. Instead, each of her photographs underscored an entanglement between analog

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and digital methods of production. In some works, such as *Color Bar Composition*, the thick, transparent, irregularly shaped Plexiglas support hosted three striped color cards arranged in a geometric composition, foregrounding the formal qualities of this historical device. Rafferty's characteristic process of affixing a transparent digital image onto a transparent surface dilutes color saturation and gestures toward the emulsions inherent in film. Still, like Smith and Wegman, Rafferty finds absurdity in the process. Her composite image *Double Wall* pokes fun at the farcical yet seductive physical prerequisites for quality image production—the photographing of brick walls to achieve focus and accuracy—at a time when all a photographer needs is a cell phone.

—*Michelle Grabner*

SAN FRANCISCO

Ad Minoliti

KADIST

View of "Ad Minoliti," 2018. Photo: Jeff Warrin.

In the foyer of "The Feminist School of Painting," her first institutional solo exhibition in the US, the Argentinean artist Ad Minoliti assembled a browsing library with books and zines on queer theory, posthumanism, science fiction, veganism, and antiracist education. Next to the bookshelves were twelve small works made by other designers and artists, including some chosen by those who co-facilitated the workshops that she organized during her residency at Kadist. The eclectic range of objects—including two collages by Elisabeth Wild, a T-shirt with a graphic by Jacqueline Casey, an unassembled figurine from the 1986 film *Aliens*, and a facsimile of William A. Anders's famous photo of the earth taken from the Apollo 8 spacecraft—was a sign of Minoliti's desire for a heterogeneous curriculum. On the wall, Minoliti hung bandannas similar to those worn by activists in two 2018 protest movements in Argentina. Groups seeking the separation of church and state adopted orange kerchiefs, while the massive numbers of people demonstrating in support of a proposed (and ultimately defeated) bill that would have legalized abortion wore green kerchiefs. The installation of books, heterogeneous artworks, and bandannas folded into triangles highlighted the connections between color, geometry, sexuality, and politics in Minoliti's previous works and in the rest of the exhibition.

Minoliti covered the walls of the two main galleries with bright murals featuring figures that were a cross between hard geometrical forms and cuddly animals, including eleven-foot-tall rectangles with kittenish whiskers, beaks, and (sex?) organs. The artist has described the cute aesthetic of such works as an attempt to queer the forms associated with Concrete movements in Latin America. In the middle of the galleries were colorful tables and chairs. The murals and furniture made up the setting for a temporary art school. During the show's two-month run, Minoliti conducted seven workshops alongside women artists, writers, and scholars from the Bay Area. Each collaborative workshop presented a genre of painting through a different feminist, queer, or antiracist critical lens and included open-ended studio sessions, with materials provided by Kadist. On days without scheduled events, exhibition visitors could sit at the tables, watch a projected YouTube playlist (of lectures by Kathy Acker, Donna Haraway, Alison Kafer, and others), and use crayons to fill in coloring-book images of Minoliti's works. This allowed for different forms of self-guided study. When she wasn't facilitating workshops, the artist became a pupil, learning from San Francisco and its artists and activists as much as she was teaching others.

"The Feminist School of Painting" folded these contemporary discussions on feminism and queer politics into Argentinean traditions of Concrete art, artist-organized education, and political artists' groups. In the 1940s, Concrete painters in Argentina and Uruguay used formal innovations, such as shaped canvases, to work against the illusionism of easel painting, which they thought would also undermine the stability of political illusions and ideologies. Similarly, Minoliti describes her works as biopolitical devices that shape environments and subjectivities—thus the exhibition-as-school and the school-as-exhibition. Artists in Argentina have long organized their own studio classes, as well as seminars for theoretical and critical discussions, as alternatives to the ossified curricula of local art academies. In the past thirty years, artist collectives and venues such as the Centro de Investigaciones Artísticas, Serigrafistas Queer, and the Centro Cultural Ricardo Rojas have also provided leftist aesthetic and pedagogical models in their exhibitions, classes, and street demonstrations.

Drawing on her experience in many of those informal artist-run organizations—and in particular on her years in the innovative studio classes taught by the painter Diana Aisenberg—Minoliti aimed to provide an experimental education akin to the one she received in Buenos Aires. At the final workshop, she seemed to have succeeded. Minoliti gave a talk about the feminist history of abstraction, and then participants painted as they mingled with the curators, the artist, and participants' children, discussing each other's paintings in progress and swapping contact information so that they could keep in touch. This school extended into the city. Minoliti's exhibition and residency were not about displaying or producing objects but were about forming subjects, or, at the very least, creating opportunities for visitors to reflect on how they might use art to shape their social relations and themselves.

—*Patrick Greaney*

LOS ANGELES

Vanessa Maltese

NIGHT GALLERY

For a 2016 show at Cooper Cole in her native Toronto, Vanessa Maltese referenced the story of Zeuxis, painter of grapes so luscious that birds were wont to peck at them. At Night Gallery, for her first solo show in Los Angeles, she continued the theme with *Duped by the grapes* (all works 2018), a wryly fragmented scene that exuberantly plays up the fruit's fictive status. As in the other six flatly graphic geometric oil paintings on view that evoked the bright, interlocking compositions of Memphis design, she employed trompe l'oeil drop shadows and visual cues for recession (space in her work is mostly hypothetical, though she does score the paint such that the wooden support shows through in each piece). In *Rigmarole*, she painted accordion-like bands stretched from

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